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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001282

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR A/S FRAZER, S/E WILLIAMSON, AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: EASTERN FRONT CHAIRMAN MUSA MOHAMED AHMED URGES
USG DEVELOPMENT AID

REF: KHARTOUM 1278

Classified By: A/CDA Mark Asquino, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: On August 21 polchief and poloff met with Assistant to the President and Eastern Front Chairman Musa Mohamed Ahmed. Ahmed praised the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement (ESPA) for returning peace to the East, and noted that good progress was being made overcoming obstacles to its full implementation. He expressed confidence the GOS would soon fund an additional \$100 million committed in the ESPA towards developing the East, in addition to the \$25 million already provided. Ahmed praised the USG for its efforts to bring peace and stability to Sudan, and expressed appreciation for USAID funding of humanitarian relief efforts during the years of conflict. But he also stated that the international community has not lived up to his expectations following the signing of the ESPA, and urged the USG to commit to additional development projects. Ahmed attributed the ongoing leadership squabble within the Eastern Front to "growing pains" as the organization transitions from a military alliance to a civil political party. He had no doubt that the Eastern Front leaders would soon resolve their differences. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Ahmed expressed appreciation for the USG's efforts to support peace and humanitarian relief throughout Sudan. He stated that the problems of the East were no different than those of the South or Darfur. He praised the ESPA for bringing peace to the East, noting that the war had a disastrous affect on the already blighted region. He acknowledged that there had been some challenges with regard to ESPA implementation details, but in a surprising deviation from the standard message of the rest of the Eastern Front, expressed confidence that the implementation committee had addressed these deficiencies. The GOS has funded \$25 million so far, he said, and he expected it to provide an additional \$100 million before the end of the fiscal year. (Note: The ESPA calls for \$600 million in development funding for the East from the GOS over five years. End Note).

¶3. (C) Ahmed said that while he is pleased with the progress on the ESPA, it alone could not solve the region's problems of underdevelopment. He said that following the signing of the ESPA, he had expected the international donor community to play a big role in developing the region, but that has yet to happen. "I don't want to criticize the international community," he said, "but I must be frank about the lack of tangible progress." Polchief responded that the USG recognizes the dire situation in the East and noted that USAID has funded several projects in the area. Ahmed responded that he was grateful for USAID's funding of

humanitarian relief efforts during the war, specifically praising Samaritan's Purse for their work, and said he would like to see USAID build on its current work in the East.

¶4. (C) Ahmed played down ongoing leadership issues within the Eastern Front (reftel). He attributed these to the difficulty of transitioning from a military organization to a civilian political party. "Along the way differences of opinion are bound to occur," he said, but expressed full confidence that the Eastern Front would resolve them and move forward. Contrary to Amna Dirar, he characterized the Eastern Front as an umbrella coalition similar to the now defunct National Democratic Alliance (NDA), implying there was no conflict of interest in his dual role as Chairman of both the Eastern Front and Beja Congress.

¶5. (C) Comment: Coming across as intelligent, poised, and confident, Ahmed would not respond directly to questions about the apparent leadership struggle in the Eastern Front. He did not criticize Amna Dirar or even mention her by name. His reluctance to criticize the NCP, his message that the international community rather than the GNU needs to do more to help implement the ESPA, and his confidence that the GNU would soon fund its commitments seemed to suggest that he may be coordinating with the NCP. In our meeting with her (reftel), Dirar accused Ahmed of making deals with VP Taha, while other observers claim that Ahmed has been coordinating closely with NCP hardliner and Presidential Assistant Nafie ali Nafie. The NCP is intent on ensuring that the Eastern Front does not make any deals with the SPLM in advance of elections, so an EF-NCP deal to fund the ESPA or a side-deal with Ahmed makes perfect sense. Ahmed's message in our

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meeting with him appeared to indicate that such a deal may already be in the works.
ASQUINO